

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: NOVEMBER 27, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Stec
 Monroe
 Champagne

Representing Planning & Community Development Department:

Patricia Tatich, Director
Jamie White, Business Development
Coordinator

Committee Members Absent:

Supervisors Belden
 Gabriels
 Tessier
 Mason

William Thomas, Chairman
Joan Parsons, Commissioner, Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk, Board of Supervisors
Trish Nenninger, Second Assistant County Atty.
Supervisor Caimano, Budget Officer
Michael Dufault, Empire Heritage
Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk

Mr. Stec called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 1:39 p.m.

(Please note, Mr. W. Thomas, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, made the quorum with Supervisors Stec, Monroe and Champagne).

Motion was made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Tatich, who distributed copies of her Agenda packet for the meeting, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Tatich noted the first Agenda item was the Pending Items list from the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors' Office. She stated copies of the list were included in the Agenda packet. Ms. Tatich proceeded with review of the Pending Items.

Ms. Tatich noted the first Pending Item was the status of the Abbreviated Consolidated Plan Update. She advised she did not have anything to report on the Plan today. Ms. Tatich stated they were going to start this work in September but they became involved in preparing some grant applications they were asked to do at the time.

The second Pending Item, Ms. Tatich said was the Outdoor Drama Theater (ODT) Project under which the first item was that Mr. LaMothe, the Assistant Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, was to arrange for an appraisal of the proposed ODT site in the Village

of Lake George. She reported Mr. LaMothe had spoken to Michael Swan, the Director of Real Property Tax Services Department, about doing the appraisal, but she did not believe it had been done at this point. Ms. Tatich advised they would continue to pursue this matter and they would keep the Committee members informed on its status.

The next item, Ms. Tatich said was that Mr. W. Thomas was to appoint a script/production advisory committee for the ODT Project. Ms. Tatich said she thought some action had been taken on this item previously. Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, confirmed three citizens have been named and they were just waiting for a meeting to be set up at the County level. She said she had spoken to Mr. LaMothe about whether these people should come to a meeting of this Committee. Mrs. Sady stated an initial meeting with the individuals needed to be held; and Ms. Tatich suggested perhaps that could be done just before the next meeting of this Committee. Mrs. Sady concurred. Ms. Tatich asked that the list of the citizens be provided to the Committee members. Mrs. Sady replied the individuals were Julie Denison, Lyle Dye and Al Hyslop. Ms. Tatich concluded the next step would be to bring the group into the Department to inform them on what their tasks would be as members of the advisory committee. Mrs. Sady agreed.

Mr. Stec asked if the Committee membership should be expanded. He noted that some of the aforementioned group were people that Mr. Monroe was familiar with; and Mr. Monroe acknowledged that was correct. Mr. Stec recognized that Michael Dufault, of Empire Heritage, was present at the meeting and he had been interested in the ODT Project and had script writing experience. He asked Mr. Dufault if he would be interested in serving on the script/production advisory committee; and Mr. Dufault responded he would be. Mr. Stec suggested that Mr. Dufault be a member of the advisory Committee. He noted he was not sure if there was anyone else that the Planning Department and the Committee members would like to consider. Mr. Stec noted the Committee should not be too large but he thought that four members would be very manageable.

Ms. Tatich asked if Mr. Stec was suggesting that the aforementioned potential candidates should be considered and that action be taken at the next meeting of this Committee. Mr. Stec clarified he was saying they should continue as they had been and to at least add Mr. Dufault and perhaps others to the aforementioned initial list. Mr. Stec acknowledged perhaps he had missed something about the advisory committee. Ms. Tatich explained the concept of having the advisory committee was that there would already have been a script under consideration, but that was not the case. She commented with no disrespect to Mr. Dufault, she would ask how all this was being handled. Ms. Tatich noted if perhaps a script was already under consideration, then Mr. Dufault would be on the Committee. Mr. Stec apologized for his misunderstanding of the concept of the advisory committee. Mr. Monroe advised he thought they should consider whether there would be anybody else who would be knowledgeable about theater productions. Mr. Stec suggested perhaps they should contact the people at the Charles R. Wood Theater for some suggestions of a couple of more potential candidates. He concurred with Ms. Tatich that the membership of the script/production advisory committee was still open at this point.

At the conclusion of further discussion on the issue, it was decided that the Director of the Wood

Theater should be contacted for some recommendations of possible members for the advisory committee. Ms. Tatich stated they would identify potential individuals to be considered as Committee members and bring the list back to this Committee. Mr. Champagne recommended instead of doing that Mr. W. Thomas should just select the members. Mr. Stec agreed they should proceed in that direction. Relative to the number of members for the Committee, Mrs. Sady advised that Mr. Monroe and Mr. LaMothe would also be members of the Committee so at this point there would be five members. She cautioned they would not want the Committee to be too large. Mr. Monroe noted if there were seven or eight members, then if someone was not able to attend a meeting there would still be enough members present. Ms. Tatich commented they should reach out to the Wood Theater group to be involved because that group did not support the ODT when it was first discussed. This would provide the opportunity to explain what the ODT was all about, she added. Mr. Champagne suggested that David King, from the Lake George RV Park, also be contacted because there was a theater at the Park.

Ms. Tatich noted the next Pending Item was that the Department was to put together a time line for the ODT for the committee members' review and approval. She said she thought the time line had been discussed informally and she did not know if the Committee members were looking for an official time line. Ms. Tatich stated she did not have that information today, so she would suggest the item should be carried forward to be handled at the January meeting of this Committee. Mr. Stec concurred with the suggestion.

Ms. Tatich spoke on the next Pending Item concerning the ODT, which she said was that Paul Dusek, the County Attorney, was authorized to perform the due diligence to determine what liabilities might exist regarding the County's take over of the not-for-profit corporation for the ODT. She stated she thought this issue had been resolved at a previous Committee meeting so she did not understand that further action needed to be taken on the matter.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Trish Nenninger, Second Assistant County Attorney, and she agreed she thought that was the status of this situation. She advised there was nothing to be reviewed this month, but she thought there was something on hold until there was more information on the matter. Mr. Champagne recalled the question was whether or not the not-for-profit corporation would be discontinued. He asked if that issue had been resolved. Ms. Nenninger said she thought the issue had been resolved at a Committee meeting a few months ago which Mr. Dusek had attended but she had not. Mr. Stec concurred. In reply to Mr. Champagne's query if the corporation no longer existed; Ms. Tatich said she did not know. She asked Mr. Dufault if he knew what the status of the corporation was. Mr. Dufault replied he did not know, but they had never held a meeting.

Ms. Nenninger stated she would check with Mr. Dusek and the minutes of previous Committee meetings and if the question needed to be followed up on they would have an answer for the next Committee meeting. Mr. Stec confirmed for Mr. Dufault that it would be a problem if the corporation still existed.

Ms. Tatich noted Pending Item No. 3 was the status of the consolidation of the LDC (Warren County Local Development Corporation) and the HRLDC (Hudson River Local Development Corporation). Ms. Nenninger reported at this time a draft agreement was being reviewed by the various parties involved that outlined the responsibilities to be performed by each party if there was a transition of the LDC. She explained the draft agreement was based on the results of a meeting between Mr. Dusek and Leonard Fosbrook, President of Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Warren County, NY, and EDC's Attorney, J. Lawrence Paltrowitz. Ms. Nenninger advised at this time Mr. Dusek had not received any comments back from EDC and Mr. Paltrowitz on the draft agreement. As a result, she stated they would not take the next step in this process until they did receive some comments from the EDC.

Ms. Tatich spoke on the planning aspects of the possible consolidation. She noted there had been several meetings on the issue and last week Jamie White, the Department's Business Development Coordinator, and she had met with Mr. Fosbrook and John Michaels, a member of EDC's Board of Directors, and Mr. Stec. Ms. Tatich advised that in the meeting she had presented a report which identified all the grants that were woven through the LDC. In addition, she said, Ms. White provided details on the status of projects that were funded either under the old HUD Buffalo Program awards or the new Governor's Office for Small Cities Program.

Continuing, Ms. Tatich noted Ms. White had also discussed the status of the clients for the program and what the incoming cash flows were. She stated they had also defined administratively what would happen next beyond the contract phase. Ms. Tatich stated they felt the details on how the consolidated agency would work would be covered both in the work plan and the budget. She noted they had also related to the EDC representatives that the members of the Board of Supervisors would need to be assured that they would still continue to receive the same level of economic development assistance for business services as they had previously. This was particularly the case for the up-county communities, she added. Ms. Tatich stated that was where the discussion had been left.

Ms. Tatich commented she thought the EDC had presumed they would be inheriting the assets of an entity that were not significant. However, she said, that was not the case as the LDC's assets were significant, both in their current cash level and in what the potential repayments would be over the next five to seven years depending on how the loans turned out. Ms. Tatich stated they had also made it quite clear that should the consolidation take effect in the near future the new organization would have to begin to develop projects and an income stream or its longevity would be severely shortened. She noted that would be because only so much cash would be coming in and so much was committed to the operation of the Planning & Community Development Department and to the investments that would be made. For example, she said, if they had to wait 15 years to be repaid they would go out of business in the short term because there would not be enough cash to carry them that far. Ms. Tatich advised the EDC representatives did recognize the importance of a work plan and a budget for the new organization and how things should move forward and that they would have to hit the ground running.

Ms. Tatich stated Ms. Nenninger and she had worked on the aforementioned draft agreement and she felt they had set forth to the EDC representatives what their responsibilities would be. She noted once the aforementioned comments came back from Mr. Paltrowitz and everyone's thoughts were on the table, then they would be able to bring that information to the members of the Warren County Board of Supervisors, who were also the members of the LDC, for their consideration.

Mr. Champagne asked if there was a projected time frame for the transition to be made. Ms. Nenninger responded the idea was to have it done by the end of the year. However, she said, since they were still waiting for the comments from EDC on the aforementioned draft agreement she did not know whether or not that time frame would be met because of the number of meetings that would have to be held to accomplish it. Ms. Nenninger noted at least the initial transition could be made. Mr. Champagne asked if the Committee members would have a chance to review the work plan and the budget. He commented it seemed at the meeting of the Economic Development Committee this morning that Mr. Fosbrook and the EDC were willing and ready to go with what they had heard so far about the consolidation. Mr. Monroe concurred.

Continuing, Mr. Champagne noted he had then asked, for example, how a loan would be made to a business and who would authorize the final loan. He said the answer was that the LDC board would authorize the final loan and the repayments would be made to that board to be administered further. Ms. Tatich confirmed that was correct. Mr. Champagne asked if there were any administrative costs associated with the loan process and how did Ms. Tatich see that working from an administrative standpoint.

Ms. Tatich replied that was the precise issue relative to the transition. She stated they believed the transition from the old board to the new entity, as far as the Micro-Enterprise Program, etc., would pretty much be seamless as they hoped there would still be an appointed loan review committee that new businesses would have to apply to. Ms. Tatich stated she had advised the EDC representatives that there would only be a certain amount of funds available for the business loan applications that would come to the board. In view of that, she noted, she had explained that the Board of Supervisors/ LDC Board would have to be concerned about what percentage of the total funds would be dedicated to continue the Small Business Loan Program but for larger loans beyond the scope of the Micro-Enterprise Program loans. Ms. Tatich said then there might be another percentage that would go for new investments or to assist with larger projects. She noted under that aspect there would be a whole series of questions, such as was that just venture capital and would the money be coming back within a two-year period.

Mr. Champagne expressed concern that the LDC would still have the flexibility to move some of its funds around to do different important things with, and he said he would still want to have some way to leverage some of the loan repayments. Mr. Monroe advised the issue of the agency's board membership was raised at the earlier Economic Development Committee meeting. He advised that the Committee had approved a resolution that the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and the Chairman of the Planning & Community Development

Committee would be members of the Board of Directors of the new organization. He noted there was some training for board members the Chairmen would have to take; and Ms. Tatich confirmed that was correct. She said Ms. White and herself would be meeting tomorrow with Mr. Fosbrook and they would be discussing how much it would take to launch the new organization. Ms. Tatich apprised they had calculated with the training, what would have to be done to comply with the Public Authority Accountability Act, and to have a website, etc., a very conservative estimate would be \$12,000 - \$15,000. They would have to take some piece off what they had on hand to put into those costs, she added. Ms. Tatich noted that would only be for one year and they would have to wait until the next year to see what that would bring.

For example, Ms. Tatich noted, Mr. Fosbrook had said EDC would like to invest in extending water and sewer to some lots the Corporation owned so they could put them up for sale. She said she had asked him if they had a business lined up to purchase any of those properties and they did not. Ms. Tatich noted although it would be a good business decision at the time to do the infrastructure work so the lots could be put up for sale, the question would be where would the income come from to keep the rest of the organization in operation. Ms. Tatich commented they would actually be launching a new business and she thought it would boil down to how comfortable the Supervisors were in understanding how the consolidation would work because the County would still have the fiduciary responsibility for all the grants it had been awarded. Ms. Nenninger concluded by next month they would know how close they were with the aforementioned comments and how close they would be to working through all the issues relative to the consolidation.

Concluding the Pending Items, Ms. Tatich noted was the status of a forthcoming vacancy on the County Planning Board. She recalled they hoped to find someone to represent Lake George on the board. Ms. Tatich advised at this time they did not yet have a name for a potential candidate from Mr. Tessier, Town of Lake George Supervisor.

Ms. Tatich commenced with review of the Items Requiring Action as outlined on the agenda. The first item she stated concerned the Access to Home Program grant (CD66). She reported they had been notified that as a result of recent (State) legislative changes the County could administer and be awarded this grant (\$200,000) which would be CD66. Ms. Tatich stated a resolution was necessary to authorize the Department to allocate the grant funds, and she requested approval of a resolution to authorize that action.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented, and to refer it to the Finance Committee. Copies of a resolution request form and a memorandum from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC) which notified the Department of the grant award were included in the agenda packet.

Next, Ms. Tatich requested approval of a resolution to authorize the extension of a maintenance agreement with SDG (Systems Development Group) for the provision of software upgrades for

the SDG Image Mate Online system. Ms. Tatich apprised they had been paying \$10,000 a year over a three-year period for the contract. The Department had more than met its obligations under the agreement, she added. Ms. Tatich apprised they had budgeted \$10,000 in the 2007 County budget for the contract, but they did not need that amount of money. However, she advised, Realtors and assessors in the County did want the contract to be continued. Ms. Tatich stated the Department had received information on behalf of the Realtors that there were enough Realtors who would subscribe to the Image Mate Online system for which they would pay \$4,000 per year. (A copy of an e-mail from Mark S. Bergman, Broker/Owner of Bergman Real Estate, to Sheri Norton, County GIS Coordinator, that outlined this information was attached to the resolution request form for this item in the agenda packet). Ms. Tatich apprised the system would cost the Department \$3,600, which meant although there were funds in the budget for the system, the cost of it would be covered by the Realtors' subscription.

Ms. Tatich stated she had spoken with Ms. Nenninger on this matter and a contract was needed. Ms. Nenninger noted pursuant to her discussions with Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, and Ms. Tatich, the current contract for the annual maintenance of the Image Mate system for the \$3,600 would expire on December 31, 2006, and it did need to be renewed.

Discussion ensued, and Ms. Tatich concurred with Mr. Champagne that the Department would realize \$400 between the cost of the contract and the \$4,000 offered by the Realtors, if the number of subscribers the Realtors had said would subscribe to the system to equal the \$4,000 did subscribe. Mr. Monroe noted that prior to this meeting they had heard that just the Realtors' group alone would be \$4,000 and that there were some others that had subscriptions. Mr. Champagne stated it had also been brought up that comparable sales information was not on Image Mate System and the assessors were somewhat reluctant to have that information be part of the system. He explained without the comparable sales information it would be quite easy to obtain the rest of the real estate information without having to pay \$4,000. Mr. Champagne commented if the assessors would agree, although it was public information, to have the comparable sales information on line, the return would be much higher than \$4,000. He said he thought many Realtors had not subscribed to the system because the comparable sales information was not available.

Ms. Tatich stated the assessors had been quite successful in lobbying to keep the information from being made public. Thus, she said she thought it would be up to the Committee members to decide if they wanted the appropriate buttons added to the website that would allow access to the comparable sales information. She noted she thought the assessors were concerned that they would be overwhelmed with public demand for that information. Mr. Champagne stated it seemed they should either provide all the information or none of it. Ms. Nenninger asked if the \$4,000 offer included the expectation that this information would be included in the System. Ms. Tatich and Mr. Monroe concurred it did not. Mr. Monroe stated what was discussed in today's Real Property Tax Services Committee meeting was that without that information being available was one obstacle to selling subscriptions to other people besides the Realtors such as property

appraisers. Mr. Monroe concurred with Mr. Champagne that since the County had money in the System which it was supposed to see a return on, then the system should include the information.

Motion was made by Mr. Monroe and seconded by Mr. Champagne to add the comparable sales information to the Image Mate Online System.

Mrs. Parsons stated if that were going to be done she would ask if she could suggest they look at what the value of adding the information might be. She apprised the County had paid \$30,000 for the system and revenues were included in the budget that were not received. Although, Mrs. Parsons stated there had been lists of people who supposedly would purchase the information and comparisons were made with other Counties about selling subscriptions for it. She advised some of this information could be acquired under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). She stated she felt if they were going to offer a product so the information could be turned over to the Multiple Listings Service (MLS) agents, which was just about every realtor in the area, then the \$4,000 offer should be revisited. Mrs. Parsons apprised the original proposal included a \$400 - \$500 subscription fee for each realtor. Mr. Monroe recalled he had gotten the impression from the Real Property Tax Services Committee meeting that there would be other revenue besides the \$4,000. Mrs. Parsons stated as the \$4,000 would make the information available to all MLS subscribers and there would not be anything to prevent them from sharing it with others, she would ask who would pay for the information if it could be obtained that way.

Mr. Champagne recommended they should stay with the aforementioned \$400 or \$500 subscription fee and when the revenues from the fees had built up, then the comparable sales information should be added to the system. He commented the comparable sales information was the most difficult part of a real estate sale for the Realtors to obtain and it was where the Realtors would save. Ms. Tatich stated in the original project the idea had been to have that information on the system, but they had been overwhelmed by what the demand for the information would be. Mr. Champagne commented he had never heard there was a problem with making the information available because the assessors objected to it. He stated either the information should be made available or the System should be eliminated. Mr. Champagne commented County funds should not be spent to add the information to the website if it would not benefit the County. Mr. Monroe mentioned he thought the information would be valuable to the Towns.

Mrs. Parsons remarked the \$3,600 would be wasted if no one used the information. Ms. Tatich advised the same group of people who had offered the \$4,000 were the ones that wanted the comparable sales, so they would just be continuing the same way they were now. She apprised over the three years the Image Mate system had been in place she thought they had only taken in about \$7,000 from the subscription fees. Mrs. Parsons pointed out that was compared to the \$3,600 appropriation. Mr. Champagne stated that according to the discussion at the aforementioned Real Property Tax Services Committee meeting, Michael Swan, Real Property Tax Services Director, had received complaints that the comparable sales information was not available online so he felt that was the reason the subscription system had not generated

revenues.

Mr. Champagne reiterated the choice was to either make the information available online or to keep spending County money on the current system, which he stated he would object to.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Monroe to approve the recommendation that the comparable sales information should be added to the Image Mate Online System. Mr. Monroe stated the assessors should be notified so they could be allowed to make their argument against the recommendation.

Mrs. Parsons suggested the amount of the contract should be revisited if this change was going to be made. Mr. Champagne stated the \$4,000 proposal should be eliminated and they should continue with the \$500 enrollment fee because the County would not be able to accept that offer at this time. Mr. Monroe asked if a resolution to that effect had been passed by the Real Property Tax Services Committee; and Mrs. Parsons replied no, that discussion was just for information purposes.

Mr. Champagne amended the motion to include the rejection of the \$4,000 offer and that the contract would be for the \$500 fee with an option to increase the fee based on the improvement of the System. Mr. Monroe amended his second to the motion accordingly.

Mrs. Parsons explained that currently the reason the Realtors were not willing to pay the \$500 fee was because they could not obtain the information they had thought was going to be available. She stated the County needed to revisit the issue of providing the comparable sales information. Mrs. Parsons noted since the County had already made the major expenditure she would guess the item would just be a maintenance item at this point. Ms. Nenninger concurred.

Ms. Tatich recapped that the recommendation was not to approve the aforementioned contract as requested, and to revisit the issue of expanding the current online information and to then figure out what the expansion would be via the contract for a new maintenance agreement. Mr. Champagne concurred. Ms. Nenninger advised under the current contract for the \$500 per year fee that was adopted by resolution in 2004, all the revenues from the second year (2005) were to be divided between the Real Property Tax Services Department and the Planning & Community Development Department. Mr. Monroe concurred. Ms. Tatich asked if the expansion issue would be brought to the full board this month; and the Committee members offered no objection to that action being taken. Mr. Monroe mentioned he thought property appraisers would also want to subscribe to the system.

Mr. Stec called the question and the motion was carried unanimously. *(Note: Subsequent to the meeting and upon further investigation by Ms. Nenninger, it was determined that these two items would be referred back to the Planning & Community Development Committee for further consideration. Thus, a resolution to authorize the contract for the aforementioned maintenance agreement was not requested for the December 15, 2006 Board of Supervisors' meeting.)*

Ms. Tatich resumed with review of the Items Requiring Action listed on the Agenda and pursuant to Item No. 3, she requested approval of a resolution to establish a Capital Project for the administration of a grant award from the New York State Canal Corporation in the amount of \$149,585 for Feeder Canal Community Connections projects along the Feeder Canal. She advised the contracts were with the Town of Queensbury, the City of Glens Falls, the Feeder Canal Alliance and the Finch Pruyn Company.

Motion was made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented, and to refer it to the Finance Committee. A copy of a resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Stec thanked Ms. Tatich and her staff for submitting the application, and he noted the projects would provide some nice improvements along the Feeder Canal. Ms. Tatich acknowledged the remarks.

Mr. Caimano entered the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Next, Ms. Tatich spoke on Action item No. 4, which concerned assistance to the Town of Horicon for a (State) Restore NY grant. She noted the Committee members would recall that the grant was submitted by the Town in an effort to obtain funds to reconstruct the Brant Lake Store (in the Town of Horicon) which was destroyed by fire a few months ago. Ms. Tatich advised the Town was awarded the grant and it did include some funds for administration for the Planning Department. However, she advised because no contracts had been received yet she could not provide any details on the grant award.

Mr. Stec noted that according to recent newspaper articles on this fire there were some new legal entanglements about it, and he asked what the impact of those issues would be on the grant award. Mr. Stec queried if the Restore NY Program was aware of the current situation. Ms. Tatich replied she did not know whether or not the State was aware of the current situation, but she did not see how it would impact the funding award. She noted the case had been made in the application as to why the community wanted to have the store rebuilt and that the owner did want to rebuild. Ms. Tatich stated there were a number of questions that needed to be answered before anything else could occur. She reiterated they had not seen any paperwork other than a letter and a notice on the State's website that the grant had been awarded.

Discussion continued. Mr. Caimano remarked the question was that the fire was now a criminal offense and the person involved might be judged guilty. He noted if that were the case, the (County) did not know anything about the person's background so perhaps they might have to repay the grant funds. Mr. Monroe commented he did not think the owners were involved in the arson of the store, but if that was the case somehow, then it would not be appropriate for government money to be used to rebuild the store. He stated there had not been any indication that the owners were involved. Mr. Stec agreed, and he said that issue had not been raised in any of the reports he had seen.

Mr. Monroe commented the Town of Chester was not funded in the aforementioned grant and he was quite disappointed about that. He stated the Town had applied for funds to demolish 20 slum buildings and to possibly build affordable housing and to do some commercial development. Mr. Monroe remarked although he was happy for the Town of Horicon, they received over \$300,000 and the Town of Chester had asked for \$100,000, so it did not make sense to him that Chester was not funded.

Mr. Caimano, County Budget Officer, discussed an issue relative to grants. He stated during the discussion with Ms. Tatich on the Department's 2007 budget he had suggested that they should consider the possibility of having a grant writer or linking with someone who could write more grants. Mr. Caimano explained the rationale for the idea was that the County was always looking for ways to bring in more revenues, but it seemed that would not be possible with the Department's current staff. Mr. Caimano asked if the idea could be investigated and should such a position come through this Committee.

Mr. Stec asked for the Committee members' input on the idea. Mr. Champagne responded there were no funds in the budget at this time for such a position. He asked if they were looking for a position that would be self-supporting through the grants. Mr. Caimano stated if a person could be found who would be able to obtain grants that would fund the position, he could see the County budget funding the position initially and then it would be supported by the grants. Mr. Caimano commented there were millions of dollars in grants out there that the County was not even aware of. Mr. Champagne asked if there were individuals available who would write grants on a commission basis. Mr. Stec concurred perhaps that could be done via a contract. Mr. W. Thomas pointed out the Planning Department received funds from the grants they acquired that helped to fund the operation of the Department each year. Thus, he said, they would not want to do something that would adversely affect that income source. Mr. Stec noted any contract would have to be structured to prevent that.

Mrs. Parsons said Ms. Tatich and she had discussed this concept just briefly. She stated they had concluded that in writing grants there was a lot of standardized information involved that may not all focus on Community Development or home programs, etc., so there might be a collaboration between the Department and someone who could write another type of grant. Mrs. Parsons stated it would be very important for the Department to work closely with any grant writer because the County would not want to pay for the duplication of what had already been created. She apprised that \$1,500 was placed in the Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services' budget based on Mr. Caimano's and her discussion on the grant writer issue. Mrs. Parsons noted as an example, the District Attorney's Office had hired someone on an hourly basis to just pursue criminal justice grants and it only cost about \$5,000 or \$6,000 a year.

Ms. Tatich stated Mrs. Parsons and she also felt that some possible scenarios relative to Departments and grants would be first, a Department might know some grant funds were available but they would not have the staff time and knowledge to prepare an application. Under the second scenario, she said, there would be Departments that would not know about any grants

or about how to obtain funds for carrying out their projects.

Continuing, Ms. Tatich stated they thought a possible approach would be to have the Departments that were aware of grants identify a staff member to act as their contact person who would bring the information on the grants to the Planning Department. Then, she said, they would identify a staff member in that Department to either be trained to write the grant or they would find someone who would assist the Department to write the application. Then the Planning Department would edit the applications, she said. However, Ms. Tatich said, she did not know where they would find the funds for a grant writer. Mr. Caimano stated they would come through the aforementioned commission-based position.

Mr. Monroe noted a grant writer could help the Towns too, because they did hear about grants that they did not have the expertise to apply for and the Planning Department did not always have the time to do them or to help with them. Mr. Caimano asked if the Towns could hire a grant writer. Mr. Monroe replied that had been done. However, he asked if it would make sense for each Town to do that or should their efforts be pooled with the County which would help pay for a County position.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jamie White, the Planning Department's Business Development Coordinator. She cautioned the grants she was familiar with very often did not allow their funds to be used to fund a grant writer so such a position might be an ongoing cost to the County. Mr. Caimano acknowledged that might be the case, but if someone brought in grant funds then the funds would be available to the County and the position would pay for itself. Ms. Tatich noted she thought they would find there were some County Departments which had staff who would be aware of potential grants for their Departments. She cited the Health Services Department as an example.

Mr. Caimano suggested Mrs. Parsons should be asked to send out a memo to all the County Departments to find out who the Departments' had available who would be aware of grants and to set up a meeting with Mrs. Parsons, Mr. Stec, and Ms. Tatich. Mr. Stec concurred with the suggestion.

Ms. Tatich advised there needed to be a clearing house for projects and applications that were being submitted. She recalled she had not been present at the last Committee meeting (October 27, 2006), but she was aware that issue had been discussed at that meeting. Mr. Stec stated as Town of Queensbury Supervisor, at the meeting he had vehemently opposed having the Town's applications screened at the County level. Ms. Tatich apprised the aforementioned Restore NY grant application took five of the Department's staff members a solid week to write. Although, she noted, it was very good that they had been successful in obtaining the grant, the question would be if there were a larger County project would it be better to put the time into a million dollar project for the Health Services Department or for a \$300,000 project for a general store.

Dialogue ensued between Mr. Caimano and Mr. Stec on the question of why Queensbury would

object to having its applications screened by the County. Mr. Stec explained the Town had been very successful in obtaining grants because they had a staff to prepare the applications and they had some resources to use as leverage that the County did not have. Mr. Stec noted he was aware there was a belief that because the State attempted to ensure its grants were distributed geographically that a County application was not as competitive as a Queensbury application. Mr. Stec stated his reply to that concern would be that he was elected by the Town residents and it was in the Town's interest to continue to do business as they had been. He explained the proposal that was discussed at the aforementioned Committee meeting was that the County should be screening and selecting which grant applications should be submitted and which ones should not be submitted. Mr. Stec commented that would not be in the Town's best interest. He confirmed for Mr. Caimano that it was suggested that all grant applications should be screened.

Ms. Tatich responded if that were the case that was incorrect. She said she thought the discussion at that meeting concerned a Shared Services grant application for which there were three applications to the State. Ms. Tatich said one application was for planning services between the City of Glens Falls and the County, one was from the County Fire Prevention and Building Code Enforcement Department and one was from the County Probation Department. Mr. Champagne stated there should be a clearing house as long as the communities that wrote their own grant applications were not included in it. Mr. Stec agreed. However, he said, the context of the discussion at the previous meeting was that there were other Towns that wanted to apply for the Restore NY grant, but if Queensbury applied for it that would hurt the other County applications. Mr. Stec said the Town did not apply because they actually did not have a good project. He acknowledged he could see a screening process if three County Departments were applying for the same grant. Ms. Tatich stated in such a situation and if the grant awards were for significant amounts like those three grants were, they would ask the County what the priority project should be.

Discussion ensued on the issue of the Planning Department writing grants for the County and the Towns which would compete against each other. Mr. Monroe clarified that the Planning Department did not write the application for Chester's project. Ms. Tatich confirmed the Department did write the application for the Town of Horicon and it was brought to the Committee members and reviewed by them. Mrs. Parsons noted the County paid for Horicon's application to be prepared. Ms. Tatich noted Mr. Monroe was kind enough to defer his request to Horicon's application because it had come in first. Mr. W. Thomas asked if there was a flaw in the (County's) grant application process that one Town would have to defer its request and pay for a grant to be written and the County would prepare and fund the other Town's application. He commented that was really unfair.

Continuing, Ms. Tatich noted Mr. Monroe had indicated he was going to write the application and she thought he had done that. Mr. Monroe clarified further that because he did not have time to do the work he had told the property owner that either the Planning Department had to write it or the property owner did. The property owner did most of the work, he said. Ms. Tatich acknowledged because the Department was so experienced in grant writing their application

would be more competitive than the Town of Chester's. She stated there was not a method to evaluate such situations. Mr. Caimano stated Mr. W. Thomas had a point, but in this situation the County had paid for one of the applications and the Planning Department did not know a competing application was being submitted. He stated that type of situation should not happen; and Mr. W. Thomas agreed.

Mr. Champagne suggested they should try to find a grant writer who would work on a commission basis and that the County should up-front the initial costs. He advised he would object to hiring more staff people.

Mr. Stec summarized that Mrs. Parsons would contact the Department heads to see if there would be interest in their being involved in the grant application process. Mrs. Parsons concurred. She noted in the meantime they would work on a plan to address this issue. Mr. Champagne requested that copies of grants the County Departments had applied for that the Planning Department had not signed off on be provided to the Planning Department for their review so they could see what problems existed in the grant application process.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne that the Department heads be notified that from now on all grant applications should be funneled through the Planning Department and for those applications that would be free, a form letter should be submitted that would outline the grant. For example, he said the form letter would list what the grant agency's criteria would be for that particular grant. Mr. W. Thomas suggested the Departments should list what grants they would like to apply for. Mr. Champagne amended the motion to include that recommendation.

Ms. Tatich asked if the Committee members were sure they wanted the Planning Department to be responsible for reviewing the applications. She queried if an application was not written very well would she then have to advise the Department head of that and they would have to rewrite it.

Mr. Champagne reiterated his motion that the aforementioned form letter should be developed for use by all the Department heads for all their grant applications. He stated then the final verdict on the application should come from this Committee.

Mr. Caimano expressed concern that process could offend Department heads who had successfully written grant applications for their Departments. Mr. Stec noted an example would be the District Attorney's aforementioned method of applying just for criminal justice grants that would not be competing with other applications. Mr. Monroe commented without a clearing house for grant applications they would not know there were competing grants. Ms. Tatich suggested Mrs. Parsons should be aware on a monthly basis what grants were being applied for and such information as, the amount of the grants, what the County match would have to be and what staff services would be needed. That information would prevent applications from being submitted that the County could not match, she added.

Mr. Caimano stated he thought they were looking for some type of notice that would include all that information and that would be provided to both Mrs. Parsons and the Planning Department for both of them to review and discuss. He pointed out to Mr. Monroe that process would serve as a clearing house. Mrs. Parsons suggested the issue could be discussed at the next Department Head meeting; and Mr. Stec concurred. He noted perhaps a sample form could be developed before the meeting for review and discussion at the meeting.

Mrs. Parsons explained the Chairman of the Board signed all the grant applications the County submitted and Board of Supervisors' Resolutions were required to authorize the Chairman to sign them. However, she said, she thought the process needed to be documented in a different way than it had been done previously. Mr. Champagne stated he was trying to prevent grant applications from competing for the same grant and one losing out to the other.

Mr. W. Thomas left the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Mr. Stec and Mrs. Parsons concurred that this discussion would be referred to the Department Head meeting. Thus, Mr. Stec advised Mr. Champagne that no action would be taken on his motion. Mr. Champagne withdrew his motion; and Mr. Stec stated the motion had not been seconded.

Ms. Tatich stated copies of three letters received by the Department were included in the agenda packet for the Committee members' information. The first letter, she said, was from the GIS Certification Institute and it advised Sheri Norton, the County GIS Coordinator, that she had met the requirements to be a Certified Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP). The second letter, she said, was to Mr. LaMothe from Scott J. Parker, Director of the Institute of Outdoor Drama at the University of North Carolina, and it concerned Mr. LaMothe's participation in the Institute's recent Outdoor Drama Conference. Lastly, Ms. Tatich stated was a letter to Mr. LaMothe from Village of Lake George Mayor Robert M. Blais, wherein Mr. LaMothe was asked to schedule a meeting of the parties interested in the Outdoor Drama with the Village's Board of Trustees and some representatives of some environmental agencies.

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Monroe, Mr. Stec adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk